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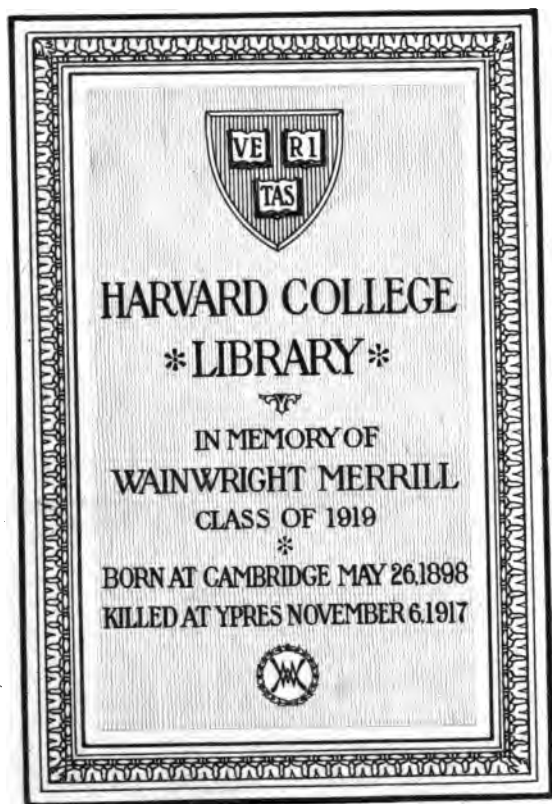
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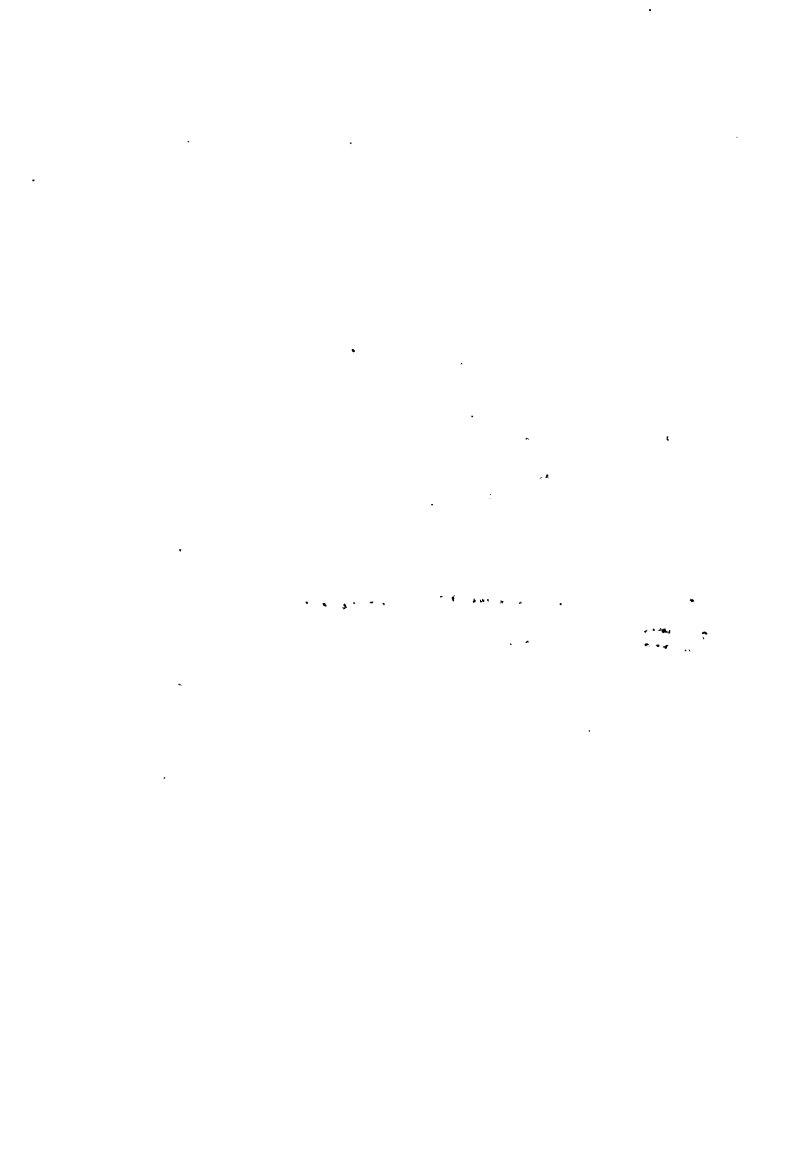
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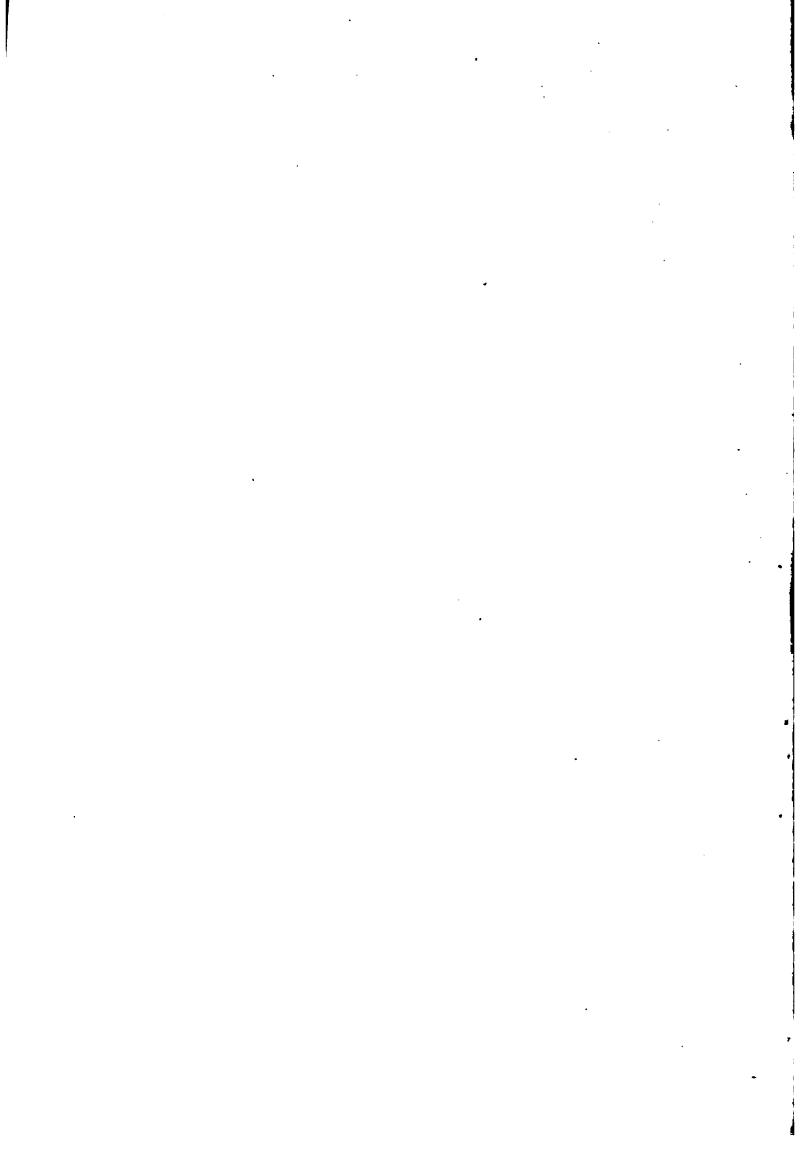
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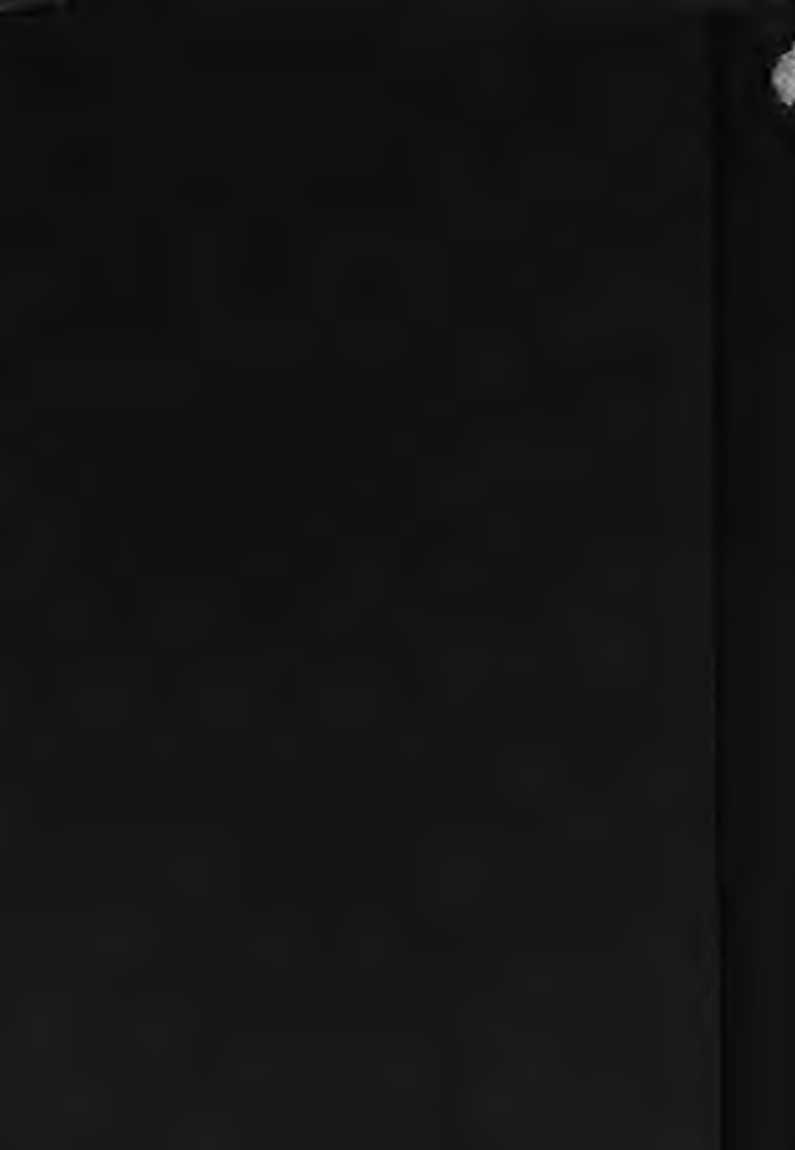
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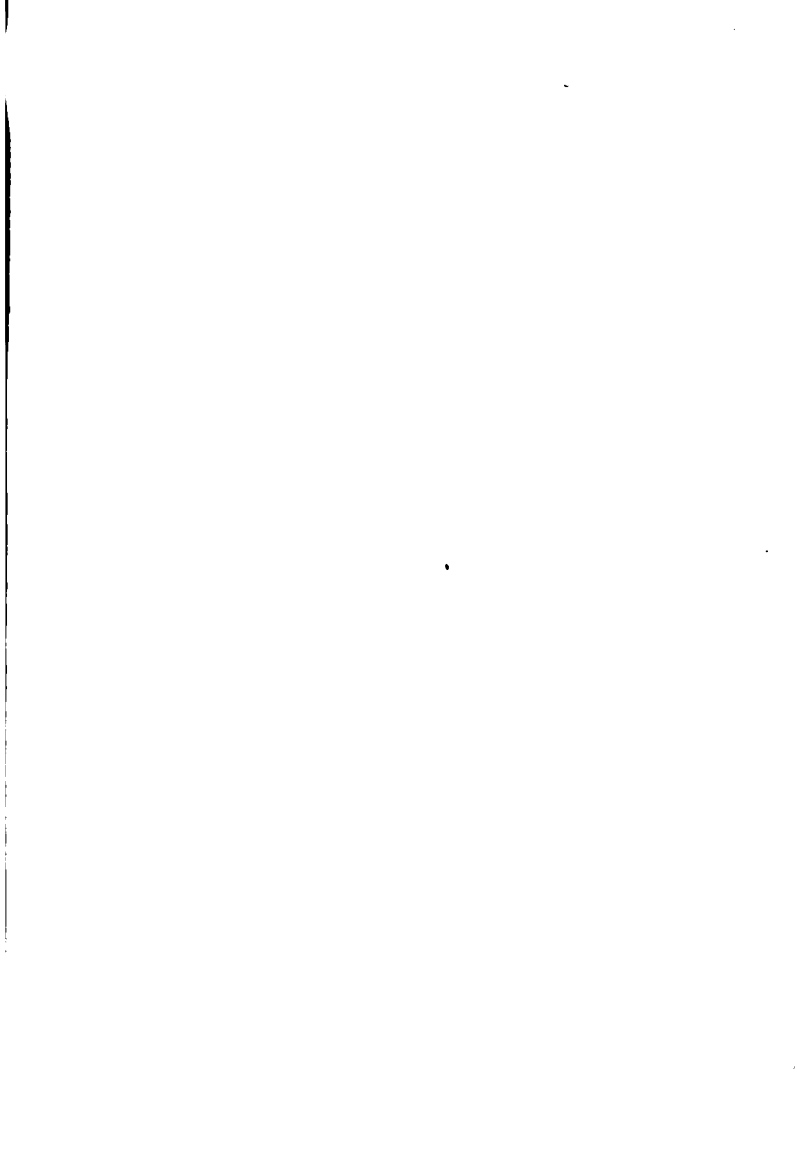
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# ✧ In \* Reckless \* Ecstasy ✧

Charles H. Sandburg

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"I had better bring this poor, pallid epistle to a close. My vocabulary is rampant to-night—the tide of expression foams, the combers glitter with speech-stuff, but the spindrift is no account. Here comes another! and it lashes this letter to its close."—*From a letter.*

"These things are as they will be, whatever I mean by that. I am like Keats at least in this, that the roaring of the wind is my wife, and the stars thru the window panes are my children. As for posterity, I say with the Hibernian, 'What has it ever done for us?'"—*From a letter.*

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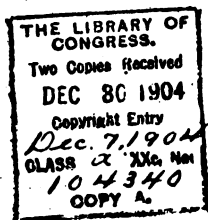
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**AND** a man's a fool if things there are  
That seethe and clash in his ardent brain?  
And the ache to utter and to see in word  
The silhouette of a brooding soul  
Is the childish play of a childish man?  
To poetize!—this is the butt and the target's eye  
For the by-word, fling and gibe.

Pass on! all ye who do  
From the core of your souls  
And the heart of your hearts.  
Pass on! all ye whose voices sound  
With a throb for all and a throe for each.  
Like giants stride you thru the crowd,  
Your hands touch theirs as kin,  
But in the cool and calm,  
O'er the press and stir  
Of the multitudes,  
Your eyes, your eyes, your eager eyes!

## Foreword.

---

**W**HEN the Spanish war broke out, one of the students of Lombard College, who was also a member of the local militia, exchanged for a time his college work for active service in the field. On his return from Porto Rico, he brought with him a companion, a comrade-in-arms, who had shared with him the embalmed beef and unremitting heat and wetness incident to the campaign. This companion was Charles August Sandburg.

And so it happened that "Cully" Sandburg entered Lombard, and so also began an acquaintance which soon ripened into a friendship between him and the present writer.

I do not remember that at that time there was anything particularly distinguished in his appearance; anything, that is, to suggest incipient genius. He looked like one of the "proletariate" rather than one of the "intellectuals"—if I may use two of the terms with which our Socialist friends assume to pigeon-hole all their fellow men;—just a rough featured, healthy boy, possessed of indomitable energy and buoyancy of spirit. But it is just these rough featured boys whose faces take on with the years the impress of that indefinable quality we call character. I suppose the "god within" can achieve more lasting results with granite and bronze than with clay and putty.

He had seen a good deal of the world; some of it, I believe, from the under side of box-cars, traveling via the Gorky line to literary fame. The boys called him the terrible Swede; not such a bad characterization, after all; for it is a quality of this old viking blood that it enables its possessor to land on his feet in any and every environment. And this the students found out, perhaps a little to their surprise. The "terrible Swede," as captain of the basket-ball team, led them to a series of remarkable victories, and when the time

came for electing the editor-in-chief of the college paper, then also for this most coveted honor in their gift they could find no one more fitting than this young descendent of the Norsemen.

My own association with him was on the literary side. He, together with two other incipient geniuses, Brown and Lauer, constituted an extremely informal organization which met Sunday afternoons in my study for literary refreshment. We called ourselves the Poor Writers Club. We were poor, we were (or wished to be) writers, hence the title. At these meetings we read for our mutual edification and criticism our own productions in prose and verse, and any other sports of the spirit which we happened to run across during the week. Very delightful, innocent, and refreshing were these meetings, when our minds wandered the free fields of fancy and imagination.

The Poor Writers Club is now disintegrated. Brown is, like myself, a pedagogue, Lauer is No. 834 on the pay-roll of a big factory, (I think, though, that he is going to be No. 1), but Sandburg, true to his Norse instincts, disdains harness. In these days of frock-coat degeneracy he could hardly build a dragon ship and scour the seas like his viking forebears, but he is making the nearest approach to this which modern manners permit; he is traveling, selling stereoscopic views for Underwood and Underwood. And he is doing it quite in the old viking spirit: "When one has the right swing and enthusiasm," he says, "it is not unlike hunting, a veritable sport. To scare up the game by preliminary talk and to know how long to follow it, to lose your game thru poorly directed argument, to hang on to game that finally eludes, to boldly confront, to quietly circle around, to keep on the trail, tireless and keen, till you've bagged some orders, there is some satisfaction in returning at night, tired of the trail, but proud of the day's work."

And when he has "bagged some orders," enough to keep him alive for a few days, he is free! Free to read, to observe men and things, and to think! He reads everything, Boccaccio, Walt Whitman, Emerson, Tolstoi, and enters with appreciation and sympathetic enthu-

ism into all that he reads. But literature, even the best, is but a pallid reflection of life: he prefers impressions at first hand. I can imagine in him something of the alighty disdainful attitude towards mere literary man expressed by Stevenson: "I think *David Balfour* a nice little book and very artistic and just the thing to occupy the leisure of a busy life; but for the top flower of a man's life it seems inadequate. . . . I ought to have been able to build light-houses and write *David Balfour* too."

And so he moves from place to place; reading, reflecting, and growing inwardly from the deep impressions of beauty and grandeur which his soul drinks in from surrounding nature. "We have been working in the country lately," he writes. "The trees have massive and far-reaching roots. The marshes by the sea are impressive in their loneliness. I have seen fish-hawks seize their prey—and more things! But now it must be adios, adios!"

I do not know how the few selections which I have gathered together in this little volume will affect others, but to me there is in them something of the quality of a Norse saga: inchoate force and virility, unconscious kinship of the soul with all that is beautiful and terrible in nature, and above all the delightful bloom and freshness and spontaneous enthusiasm of expression of one who is witnessing the sunrise for the first time.

PHILIP GREEN WRIGHT.

Urbana, Ill., October 3rd, 1904.

**6**TH things written herein are endeavors at self-expression. They are put forth with no other plea than that I could do no better, and "what I do, I do; and what I do not do, I do not do." You may find passages that inspire you, or enlighten you, or please you; or you may find only baubles, lusterless and gaudy. But such as they are, and hoping it the sweetest tribute it is possible for me to pay to any one,

I Dedicate them to

one who has kept a serene soul in a life of stress, arrested beauty from the commonplace, and scattered her gladness without stint or measure.

MY MOTHER.

## In Reckless Ecstasy.



**M**ARIE CORELLI says it is often the case that ideas which cannot be stated in direct words may be brought home by "reckless ecstasies of language." It is fear of the accusation of obfuscation that drives writers to the reckless ecstasy. Browning and Emerson often eat clouds and drink wind while they whitewash the empyrean, but you will find if you follow them, that now and again you are trailing a star in godlike fashion.

I recently read a "New Thought" article by Elizabeth Towne. There was hardly a single proposition in it, but could be punctured by a school-boy's logic. Precision limped and staggered. But it pounded into my brain more truths as to the power of mind over body than any other piece of writing I have read. I have in mind a brilliant Illinois lawyer who had a mental prowess that made his opponents quail at the knowledge that he was to be against them. "Jim Mackenzie on the other side? God help us!" Yet before he passed to that bourne whence no man returns, he used to say, "Shakespeare was a fool—the idea of taking arms against a sea of troubles!" On him the reckless ecstasy was lost. There are depths of life that logic cannot sound. It takes feeling.

There are some people who can receive a truth by no other way than to have their understanding shocked and insulted. It is this class which drove Lyman Chandler to that reckless ecstasy, "Humanity does not need uplift so much as it needs to be hit over the head with a club." A human truth is a lie and hides as much of life as it shows. "A dogma learned is only a new error, but a spirit communicated is a perpetual possession," says Stevenson.

The Bible contains one incomparable specimen of the reckless ecstasy. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity," said Koheleth, and he rang the changes on the sentiment in poignant passages. But it is Christ who surpassed them all in the pathos of that infinitely tender wail: "The light that is in them is darkness, therefore how great is that darkness!" This paradox poetizes the awful fact as does no equal amount of words in all scripture, sacred or profane.

When I seat myself in the sumptuous saddle of "The Ring and the Book," and ride upon its reckless ecstasies, I get more light and truth and wonderment than in listening to any preacher who splits hairs and pumps platitudes for a living. It is well to make distinctions; it is the shades, the gradations, lights, and shadows, not the colors, that mock the artist. Nevertheless there are thoughts beyond the reach of words, and these the seers transmit only by lurid splashes of verbiage that cannot be gauged by common-sense, but must be sought out by the spirit of sublimity in us. I try to express myself sensibly, but if that fails, I will use the reckless ecstasy. As Kipling has one of his untamed children of the forest say, "I will be the Word of the People. Mine will be the bleeding mouth from which the gag is snatched. I will say everything."



## The Ideal:

A Fantasy to the Unknown Goddess.



Every man must have a pole-star.—*Old saying.*  
A man's reach should exceed his grasp.—*Browning.*



**O** STAR! radiant, glowing orb!  
Matchless, beautiful, scintillant!  
When the brute surged fierce and lust sought hold,  
And the minions that drag men down,  
Then thou didst shine, O queen! O star!

O star! exquisite, piercing luminary!  
Soft, superb, undying iridescence!  
Thou fated one of all the hosts  
Didst pencil on my brow in living gold,  
Indelible as light, that one word, "Live!"  
O star! O dazzling, splendid gem!

Deep as I go in the pits of muck,  
Far as I stray on the roads to hell,  
Meshed as I am in the throes of flesh,  
Ever your eyes are the eyes I see.  
Their light beats in on the pulse of my soul,  
To rouse to thought the things to be;  
O star! inspiriting, marvelous star!

## The Sphinx.



**W**ORDLESS, there it poses, gazing bland  
And calm, as tho the sum of all the plausibilities  
Of Time were pent beyond the brow of stone;  
Suave and unperturbed it was, while races that are vanished  
Sought to wrest from it a word  
And make it speak, and utter forth  
The mystery behind the hard, still lips.

Myriads of camels passed its front  
Bearing slaves and sultans on their way;  
Wanderers have plied their chisels on its face;  
Seas of sand their changeful billows  
Round this cave of all the secrets rolled:  
And they are gone, nor haunt this mongrel's wierd repose.

Thru the cowl of years that wrap it round  
It peers, bereft of sound, but eloquent;  
Meseems, it is a mutilated harbinger  
Of something unafraid  
That pays its adoration to the Unexplained.  
Would mockery look out from such serene and placid hulk?  
Or is it patience wrought in rock,—  
Such patience as would watch  
The crash of planets and the world aflame  
And then peer on as tho beyond the wrack  
Is that which knows it all?  
This cat-thing that has lain content these ages  
Knows its ground.

## Complacency : Austerity.



**C**OMPLACENCY, how hast thou chained thy thousands!

What men would cozen progress, lave it with the blood of love,  
What men would out into the noonday sun, the deeps of night,  
And fling their manhood into frays for righteous things,  
Like war-mad soldiers surging to the fore,  
Were't not that thy ne'er absent aspect,  
Soft and luring, riseth up to murmur, lip to lip,  
"Not even now, not yet the while, for all the world's so still, so  
calm, so bright,  
So dear, so fair, so good to you — stay thus!"



**A**USTERITY, how few dost thou bring to thy cold, pure presence!

The chastity of stars, the lift and rise of peaks and crags that  
ne'er decay,  
The white of snow, the way-worn eagle's cry, the clouds,  
All these you call your own.  
Come straggling to thy mountain fanes  
The lean, wan pilgrim spirits.  
The dying afternoon thy love, when, etched across the sky,  
The purple peaks loom forth, so solemn, sad, serene.  
How like the mountain stream of water, ceasing not and incorrupt,  
Runs on the faith no mountains can withstand.

## Vengeance : Pity.



**I** AM Vengeance, the sister of justice;  
A ravisher am I, and what ill-born and wayward one like me?  
For I nurse Grief and Wrong and feed them rancor till they grow  
and rise to the thews of girded men

And strike!

Mobs are my children, mobs and mad-men do I love and rear,  
And wheresoe'er the cataracts of frenzy flow,  
There am I in fondness gazing on the rule of riot and the trembling  
tide of crime and chaos.



**I** AM Pity, and on my brow is written, "Pause."  
The gush of blood is an awesome sight  
And ere I stab, I pause,  
And pausing, sheathe the blade.  
I do not leap headlong  
While Anger and Resentment ride the heart.  
The ignorant who gloat at desecration of their own,  
All those who grope and stagger where the light is not,  
And those who cannot read and therefore maunder o'er the passport  
others bless,  
For these do I knock on the hearts of men who read,  
And, reading, know that hate is hell.

## Experience.



**T**HIS morning I looked at the map of the day  
And said to myself, "This is the way! This is the way I will go;  
Thus shall I range on the roads of achievement,  
The way is so clear—it shall all be a joy on the lines marked out."  
And then as I went came a place that was strange,—  
'Twas a place not down on the map!  
And I stumbled and fell and lay in the weeds,  
And looked on the day with rue.

I am learning a little—never to be sure—  
To be positive only with what is past,  
And to peer sometimes at the things to come  
As a wanderer treading the night  
When the mazy stars neither point nor beckon,  
And of all the roads, no road is sure.

I see those men with maps and talk  
Who tell how to go and where and why;  
I hear with my ears the words of their mouths,  
As they finger with ease the marks on the maps;  
And only as one looks robust, lonely, and querulous,  
As if he had gone to a country far  
And made for himself a map,  
Do I cry to him, "I would see your map!  
I would heed that map you have!"

## The Plow Ox : The Spanish Bull.



**O**VER the dampened clods I drag slow hoofs;  
Dulled are my horns and I am not proud,  
Nor do I rear my head in air  
As you, like a Sierra peak, brother, to cloud and sun.  
Drooped is my head and I let it hang;  
The yoke cuts in on the hair and skin  
Of my gaunt, lank, shoulder-bone;  
Where the prong of the goad has gashed my flesh,  
I burn with the salt of my sweat.  
I stumble along to the furrow's end,  
Nor reck nor care, o'er the sod and air,  
For aught but the plowman's goad.



**T**HOU piece of meat and bone and hair, thou art one of my kin!  
Gleams from thy oozing eyes, no combat, purpose, will;  
Majesty gone, achievement a word.  
Sunk in the sod is the longing wild  
For the prairie-rose and the blue-grass green.  
Gulp thy despair, uprear thy nose, and shake thy shaggy brow,  
For I—I am one of thy kin!  
I, with the scimitar bones and their poniard points  
On the crown of my terrible head,  
I, with the legs of steel, the eyes of fire, and the shoulder-prow,  
I am one of thy kin!  
My neck, my step, my surging flanks, the Moors applaud with  
their eyes;  
A sweep of my horns and I toss a live horse,  
And the picador gore in his heart.  
I am the deer and the weasel, the tiger, the eagle—  
And I am thy brother and one of thy kin!

## Charles XII, of Sweden.



**T**HOUGH I have ranged the annals of the past  
And cast my eyes on many sovereigns of yore,  
Ne'er have I seen a royal one like thee,—  
No purpled one so prodigal of thrones.  
What conquerors have conquered but to give,  
What victors e'er have strown their spoils,  
What warriors have scattered captured things  
With lavish hand like thee?  
The panoply and pageantry of sceptered ones you scorned,  
The banquetings, the heraldry and pomp  
Forswore for common soldiers' fare,  
That you might lie untented  
On the frozen, wind-swept prairies  
In a palace lit by everlasting lights!

Immortal Swede! Across the years  
There comes to us a glint  
Of how a man should laugh at luck;  
And whether it was sleet that beat athwart thy brow,  
Or sunshine bathing thy proud locks,  
Steady and straightforward, smiling,  
Did you face the shifting stars of Destiny.

## So Whom My Hand Goes Out.



**T**HE unapplauded ones who bear  
No badges on their breasts,  
Who pass us on the street, with calm,  
Unfearing, patient eyes,  
Like dumb cart-horses in the sleet!

The unperturbed who feel the oldness—  
All the sadness of the world—  
Yet somehow feel the sacredness  
Of grime upon the hands,  
And even know the rush of pity  
For the ones who know not  
That some Power builds a callus out of blisters.

The eyes! the eyes that pierce  
The dust and smoke of unrewarded toil  
And count it gain and joy  
To have lived and sweat and wrought  
And been a man!



## Wayside Words with Comrades.



**I**F I can trot out a thought and put it thru some pretty paces for you, I know you won't think it vain on my part; and if occasionally one of my ideas limps or has the blind-staggers, you will trust that in time I will come to know a good horse, won't you?



**H**AVEN'T you ever thought there were pretty dreams pattering through your fancy, peeking out at you from around corners with roguish eyes and arched brows, and when you took pad and pencil and started to etch them out, the little elves were gone, vanished—just like elves?



**M**ANY a man who has covered continents in the course of his journeys, is really not wise because he has never approached intimacy with stars, flowers, clouds, and grass. There have been villagers—Thoreau or Pater for instance—who never wandered far from their own little states, yet came into contact with things of wonder and mystery, and penetrated immensity and traversed infinity, as has never a globe-trotter.



**N**O cause can be hurt by discussion. Let an idea be brought out into the light of day where the sun and the rain of thought and speech can play on it, and if it is good, it will grow, and if it is not good, it will perish.

**I**N a small town in Delaware I met an avatar of the grave-digger in "Hamlet." He was chargé d'affaires in a cemetery, but was idling. I asked him why he was not working. He answered, "My business is burying the dead, and the dead have stopped dying! So here I am."



**A**mong the legends current in the Levant is this, to the effect that one day in the city of Jerusalem, some two thousand years ago, a crowd of men and boys gathered on a street. The object of their interest was a dead dog. He had gone mad, had been stoned to death, and then dragged thru the mud and over the stones of the streets. The members of the crowd were calling attention to the bruises where the blood trickled thru the hair, to the foam on the loose-hanging lips, and the grewsome, ghastly aspect of the animal. The expressions were of loathing and horror. But one Man paused before leaving the scene and said as he pointed at the beast, "Pearls are not equal to the whiteness of his teeth." And they marveled at Him, for He spoke as one having authority, who saw Good in everything.



**I**N the great battles of the world the fighting has been opened by the artillery and cavalry. The artillery hurries forward to send shot flying and shell screaming. The cavalry gallops, cuts and slashes, hurtles and jostles. But the victories have been clinched only when the infantry crossed the field. The infantry is slow, patient, persistent, and if its hope is steadfast, it sweeps everything before it. Likewise, impetuosity, daring, audacity, has been a factor in every remarkable advance of art, science, and politics. But no great, lasting triumph has ever been accomplished without that ardor which had to go slowly and measurably, imperturbably, and without applause.

**JOLLYING** is a fine art. Those who have attained the genius of it are the only true royalty of the universe. "Wit, an't be thy will, put me into good fooling" is from Shakespeare. The laughless man is a loveless man—something terrible has taken the sweetness out of his life. Seth Low lost the mayoralty of New York because he lacked the right humor. He was smug. "Did you ever see his smile?" said a Tammany man. "It gives me the creeps." The capability for good fooling is an attribute of every beloved master among men, and in proof history presents no more sublime and touching instance than Abraham Lincoln. My prayer is that I may be a good fool. It is sad, but the golden days are gone. Time was I felt better and had more cash, but then—what's the difference? The difference is what remains when the subtrahend has been taken from the minnend.



**T**HE happiest moments of our lives we are not aware we are happy. When the joy of life surges thru us at its highest and finest, we do not know we live. The gladdest hour of the foot-ball hero is not when the game is over and amid plaudits and congratulations, the skill and nerve of the contest are gone over. No, the time when the supreme and incomparable gladness of being passed thru his blood and brain was when he tore "thru the line," absolutely abandoned, battering into the walls of flesh, breaking them down, and crashing on thru every opposing force. Looking back on it afterward is cheap pleasure—reminiscence is for old men. When we are happy, we do not say, "I am happy! so happy!" for this is to wrap a sunbeam in words—feeling for it, it is gone. Exultation is a rubber ball.

I know a man who finds joy in seeing a full moon burst into view from a mass of thick, woolly clouds. On first sight of it, he softly swears. He is surprised and glad. He looks and looks—the pleasure oozes—satiety comes. He has absorbed all it has to give him.

He says, "Beautiful! beautiful!" but he knows that the first, fine rapture of it is gone from him. He looks again and again, but that prime ecstasy of the first sight of it will not come back. A little sad, a little regretful, he goes his way. "Beautiful! beautiful!" he mutters now and then, but he knows he is only trying to reassure himself. The memory of it is nothing like that first flash of glory he knew.

So when people say they are happy—so happy—they either mean they are very comfortably situated, or they are remembering and reassuring. If you're happy, you don't know it—you're just happy. When you gratulate yourself on your happiness, it has gone.

In the same world, by my eye, there is no conscious sadness. When you say, "How sad I am! How bitter the world!" you are admiring yourself as a piece of heroism and fortitude. How vivid literature is on this point! The tall, statuesque heroine walks down by the riverside. The mists gather on her raven tresses. Her great, sad eyes moan and toss. Her pallid lips move in mute anguish. And—to trail the novelists to the end—a convulsive sob escapes her, she crosses the river and is lost among the hills.

In real life, tho, she was enjoying herself. It was sweet to think how she had been betrayed, wronged, stung, cut, and snubbed, and yet lived on to sit here by the riverside, pensive, spotless, chaste. The melancholy derived from the thought that we individually have been wronged is a cheap pleasure. The fact is, the sorrows that pain and ache, that gash the peace of a soul, are the ones men and women want to forget. We bring out the little bonbons of melancholy fancy and nibble with our friends, but there are crusts of reality we never set forth. We try to forget we have them. They feed the skeleton in the closet.

## Pastels.



**E**VENING is the meeting of Day and Night. The sun nears the horizon, salutes in proud, flaring red, and writes his regal homage on a crimson canvas. Soft, loving, gentle, sacrificial, sympathetic, blood red. Hard, cruel, blazing, relentless, unforgiving, fagot-fire red. Delicate, aery spires of golden red. Lingerling, rolling masses blent of poppy-bloom and rose-blush. In sweet array, the souls of all dead hollyhocks, marshalled in summer glory. A shaft of purple across the field, the announcement of Night. One more faint and far-off flush. Day has kissed night farewell. Night has set her jeweled tapers in the sky.



**T**HE metropolis holds the essence of all roar and rush and turmoil. I heard the sounding cracks of the whips of Need—the need of Power, of Wealth, of Bread, of Love. The rampant, infectious spirit of unrest, the flash and clash and crash and cry—I thought it must ring round about the world. The gavels of Power were striking the desks, the skirts of Loveliness swished the sidewalks; the tones of Splendor up-town, of Might down-town, of Woe on the East Side, were blended into a roar—one continuous, unremitting, tumultuous roar. God, immortality, and duty; hell, lust, and greed; Christ and Cain, in a chaotic, wondrous mass.

Over all stood the goddess of Love, calm, serene, beautiful. On her left hand stood Sorrow, on her right hand stood Peace. At her feet sat Death, with the pale, sad face of one maligned in misunderstanding.

**I**T is latter winter. The days are growing longer, the sun-kiss warmer, and the south winds speak of spring. Gray and brown hills rise tier on tier to a distant ridge on the horizon where a gray-blue haze hangs soft and unchanging. There are no sounds save the rustling of a few dead leaves, the calls of the wild bird, or now and then the crackling of some withered bough. They are so faint, so far-away, they seem unreal. Each tree stands grim and gray and patient, as tho it knows how soon it will be arrayed in green and smile from its height to violets, anemones, and old companions.

The haze hangs utterly motionless. In the hills, all sounds seem sleeping. How long ago was it? Or did it ever happen?—those words that were a travesty on justice. Did greed and eyeless love stalk by me arm in arm one day? No—it is a dream and a fantasy. I have forgotten it all. I know not even whom to forgive.

Over the hills, the sounds sleep on. The haze hangs low subdued in blue and gray. I would not change it if I could.



**I**T is only a little stone church with a little square tower. No cathedral this, with massive sides that throw out long, black shadows. Only Religion's cottage in a country town. Green vines clamber over the gray stones from spring till winter and a few evergreens near give a contrasting gray and green all the year.

How often it glides tip-toe into my memory! When the jar and rack of the world are too discordant and jumbled, this little old church comes to mind like a soothing poem set in sweet sounds. I call it my anthem in stone, and I have wondered if those who built it ever thought that each small stone was a note as true and sweet and as holy and beautiful as any monolith of a mighty cathedral.

St. Peter's and its dome, Milan and her hundred spires, may be oratorios, but as we sometimes prefer a twinkling star of night to the great, glaring sun of day, or a humble, simple lyric to a grand and awful tragedy, so would I at times prefer to the world the little gray church, my anthem in stone.

## Millville.



**D**OWN in southern New Jersey, they make glass. By day and by night, the fires burn on in Millville and bid the sand let in the light.

Millville by night would have delighted Whistler, who loved gloom and mist and wild shadows. Great rafts of wood and big, brick hulks, dotted with a myriad of lights, glowing and twinkling every shade of red. Big, black flumes shooting out smoke and sparks; bottles, bottles, bottles, of every tint and hue, from a brilliant crimson to the dull green that marks the death of sand and the birth of glass.

From each fire, the white-heat radiates on the "blowers," the "gaffers," and the "carryin'-in boys." The latter are from nine to eighteen years of age, averaging about fourteen, and they outnumber the adult workers. A man with nothing, hailing from nowhere, can get an easy job at fair pay, if he has boys who are able to carry bottles—many men in Millville need no suggestion from Roosevelt—boys can carry bottles and girls can work in the cotton-mills near by.

The glass-blowers union is one of the most perfect organizations in the country. The daily wage runs from five dollars to twenty dollars, and from four to eight hours is a day's work. But the "carryin'-in" boys work nine and ten hours and get two dollars and a half and three dollars a week. Passing back and forth in the pale, weird light, these creatures are imps in both the modern and the old-time sense of the word. They are grimy, wiry, scrawny, stunted specimens, and in cuss-words and salacious talk, they know all that grown men know. In the use of the ever surviving, if not ever fitting, superlative, "damndest," they are past masters all.

Their education has consisted mainly of the thoughts, emotions and experiences that resulted from contact with "blowers" and "gaffers," besides views of a big, barn-like space lit up by white-hot sand. This has been their universe at those times of day when they were most alive, most wide-awake, most sensitive to impressions. The manufacturers have endowed a night-school, but (the teacher told me) the boys cannot keep their heads up and their eyes open during the sessions, therefore their brains don't make much headway—God help them!

Yes, I think, God help them, for their eyes remind me of shrivelled pansies, and I can't resurrect pansies, I can only see that the pansies have good soil to grow in, pure water, fresh air, sunshine, stars, and dew; and for companions they should have roses, carnations, asters, violets, sweet-peas,—and pansies that likewise are not shrivelled. Brother Shawlgotch will lead us in prayer!



**A**LL around Millville are "miles upon miles of sweating sand,"—not a decent farmer in a radius of six miles. It was all at one time a sea bottom, and as the man of imagination tramps thru the half starved, scrubby pine trees, his mind is carried back thru the centuries to the time when the air about him was water, and uncouth, nameless monsters lunged and lolled where now the sweet, south winds blow. There were then no joyous, merry sounds—for fishes do not sing—and silence brooded over all save for the endless surging of the desolate waters. Yet if fish there were, then it was here near the bottom that the eyeless fish lived and saw not. And why should they, if perchance they wandered into shoals where the light broke through, be denied the tints of the sea-shell, the green and amber glows that the sun wove into the water, the pale, golden glints of the rising moon spanning the waves? Had they known what they were missing—the full significance of their blindness—



we would have seen morbid, riotous, revolutionary, restless—very, very, restless fish.

Perchance they were eyeless because their forefathers preferred the ooze-dark of the bottom. The light that was in them was darkness, therefore how great was that darkness! Then as they worked upward with longing and desire, gleam by gleam, ray by ray, light thrilled their nerves from head to tail. So to-day the flying-fish cavort in the tumbling white-caps as though neither now nor in the dawn of the ages was there a slimy, unlighted sea-bottom that lured good fish from the light of a final and glorious destiny. I' faith I think—

There should be a tale of the fish sans eyes,  
Who roamed where the sea-ooze floats,  
Where the pearl fed skull of the sailor lies  
And mocks the slumbering boats.

How the fish roamed up in their restless pride  
And learned to laugh in the light,—  
How they came to see in the moaning tide  
Things of the day and night.

They romp in the blue of the surface glow,  
So glad, so gay, and so free,—  
To think that once far away and below,  
They had no eyes in the sea!

## Pulse-beats and Pen-strokes.



*O the vanity fair that drags them down,  
Bubbles of dust with hair for a crown—  
Sold! sold!  
Take them away for a dole of gold!*



**T**HE cogs and the wheels, they hum and whirl,  
Paying their bond to a human brain;  
They card the wool, they hammer the steel,  
They utter no cry of joy or pain.

Beauty and art! and the glow of bounding life,  
Toil and crime! and the spawn of a huddled den;  
The red lights glitter and the women leer  
And the shambles reek with the sweating of men.

Lo! soft in the east a rising star!  
And a surge of men who at last understand,  
And a peal of laughter bold and gay  
And a hurrying on to an equal land.

For the hovels shall pass and the shackles drop,  
The gods shall tumble and the systems fall;  
And the things they will make, with their loves at stake,  
Shall be for the gladness of each and all.

Homes that are homes and men that are men,  
And a writer sad with a wistful pen;  
Pulse-beats and pen-strokes, you with your ken,  
How have you fought and how have you thought  
In the battling worlds of men?

## **An Old Tragedy.**



**S**OFT Pleasure sat her by Youth's side  
And pointed down the lane to Time;  
"Come, let us kill him now," she said,  
"He comes so burdened, 'tis no crime."

Wine, Dress, and Midnight Balls in host  
Were called to knife him as he passed.  
"Take that! and that!"—they drove their steel  
And thought that Time had breathed his last.

But Time, unhurt, passed noiseless on,  
Till subtly still, he came once more,  
And marked sweet Youth with shrivelled skin,  
Sans hair, sans teeth, pale to the core!

## The Dead-Sea Apple.



**H**AD it been beauty past my reach,  
Or far beyond my humble ken,  
There would have been a tint of joy  
In all the pain of longing then.

But that the red, sweet hues should fade  
Into a dust, and nameless ash,  
And promises to gray-sick rot—  
O God, that sight and sense thus clash!

## Revelation.



**T**HAT years and years had thus gone by,  
And this dear truth not met my eye;  
That I had groped, my God forgot,  
All beauty but a blight and blot;

That now this truth should flash to me,  
And I should crimson visions see;  
And white and pure, set round with gold,  
This thought should bloom, life still unrolled!

## The Quick and the Dead.



**W**AS the wind only jesting last night when it said,  
"The days are not long from the quick to the dead."  
For the house-windows shook and the tree-branches tossed;  
The rain-bells rang for the souls that are lost.

I asked of the wind where the lost ones sequester,  
In days that are now or days that are yester?  
While the muffled rain beat, moaned the night-wind low,  
"To the hell upon earth do the lost ones go.

"In the beds that they make must the lost ones lie,  
On the roads that they choose must they run and die;  
The quick are the lost and the dead are the found—  
There are no souls in the dust underground!"

## **A Homely Winter Idyl.**



**G**REAT, long, lean clouds in sullen host  
Along the sky-line passed to-day;  
While overhead I've only seen  
A leaden sky the whole long day.

My heart would gloomily have mused  
Had I not seen those queer, old crows  
Stop short in their mad frolicking  
And pose for me in long, black rows.

## Survey.



**A**MBITION is a crested wave

That leaps and lunges toward the shore,  
To break and scatter on the sands  
With one long, loud, and baffled roar.

Thus to have dared to cross the deeps  
To those dull sands, for such success,  
It may not pay, and yet, I think,  
They buy a peace with restlessness.



## Quatrains.



**I** STOOD me near the mart and watched them flow  
To worship gold and all the things that glow,  
And force; and no man came away and smiled  
And softly said, "I have enough, I'll go."



**T**HE fools who laugh at those who booze and scrap—  
Have they as yet put on compassion's cap?  
Have they been lashed by Circumstance till they  
No respite found but in Oblivion's lap?



**I**T would not be so bad to long for booze  
And fondle bottles damp with precious ooze,  
Could we but queer the green-eyed snakes who leer  
Across our way whene'er we hear, "You lose!"



**I** DO not gild my words with Attic salt,  
You think; and yet that's surely not my fault;  
I would be fresh as winds that sweep the sea,  
And pack my words to last like God's basalt.

## The One Man in all the World.



**I** AM the one man in all the world most important to myself. I am as good as any man that walks on God's green earth. I am also as bad as any creature that ever transgressed a law of life. The spirit of all benedictions is in me, and the germs of all crime. If it were not so, I could not see, believe, love, and aspire. I glory in this world of men and women, torn with troubles and lost in sorrow, yet living on to love and laugh and play thru it all. My eyes range with pleasure over flowers, prairies, woods, grass, and running water, and the sea and the sky and clouds. I am proud—yes I am proud, for I know no highly useful man who does not think highly of himself. On a country road under the stars of night, I bare my head.

Above all other privileges vouchsafed us earthly pilgrims, I place the privilege of work. The brightest, most lasting happiness I know is that which comes from yearning, striving, struggling, fashioning, this way and that, till a thing is done. Ah, down in my heart somewhere is an odd little litany which says I am near the source of all Good and all Power, because I, in my way, can do, shape, and create.

I am not a thing that hurries and worries. I am living my own God-given life with no excuses to offer anywhere but in the tribunal of my own conscience. I am careless, graceful, easy. I cultivate action without friction. What I am trying to say here has been told in marble—the Winged Victory bodies it all. I would have that poise and abandon. Foot pressing the ground, head in the air, free and untrammelled, forever alive and forever forward, I would move on and on and on. I would feel and realize the laws of gravitation,

impact, and resistance, and be adjusted so as to move in harmony with the same forces that keep the moon from smashing thru the Milky Way.

I never slam a door, and I would rise above all the petty, inevitable vexations of each day, and be cool and steady in all tumult of talk and prejudice. On occasion, I believe in anger, no matter what the wear and tear on nerves. I will lose myself, lash, taunt, and shame that man who by his superior gifts or situation knowingly darkens the lives of others. My logic would bludgeon fallacy and my wit run through folly and superstition like a rapier. Because of me and men like me, more light, more love, more beauty, peace, and joy, more comradeship is coming into this scheme of things.

I pray for a heart unspoiled, one without room to remember a wrong, tender and radiant as rain and sunlight. For the temple of that heart, I would have a body, clean, serviceable, comely. Under the dome—back of the forehead's arch—I would have a mind alert to all truth and beauty, an atelier where I might sculpture kind thoughts, bold deeds, and sweet dreams. This heart, this body, this mind, would be me.

I would be calm, unafraid, and unweirded. There would be a look on my face and the word on my lip to bring men hope and cheer and may be laughter pure as music. So would my comrades find me wherever I went. Captains, toilers, kings, queens, drudges, vagrants, fools, would know me all. I would pass thru the world one of the masterpieces of God, a man. And having tried to live thus, I cannot think but that I would be of use in some way, even down among the dead men.

## Invocation.



**O** Forces and Potentialities that circumscribe the destinies of men, move me always to know the right thing to do. Let me always in my decisions and actions lean rather toward equanimity than ardor. Grant me that I may not be rattled or lose my head in any clutter or confusion that may arise, and on the other hand, let me not be oblivious to the proper time for recklessness.

Give me a stout heart to face entrenched error, and a tender feeling for all the despised, rejected, and forsaken of mankind. Let me not be maudlin in my pity; let me feel my kinship with all men in such manner that I may sympathize in just measure with those on the pinnacles of opulence, and with those at the bottom of the pit.

Make me a good mixer among people, one who always passes along the Good Word. Let me laugh in the right place; deliver me from mysticism; and lead me to think no man's opinion final. Provide that I be sensitive to criticism, yet proof against insult and badgering. Give me a keen eye for the main chance, but give me to remember that I can take nothing hence.

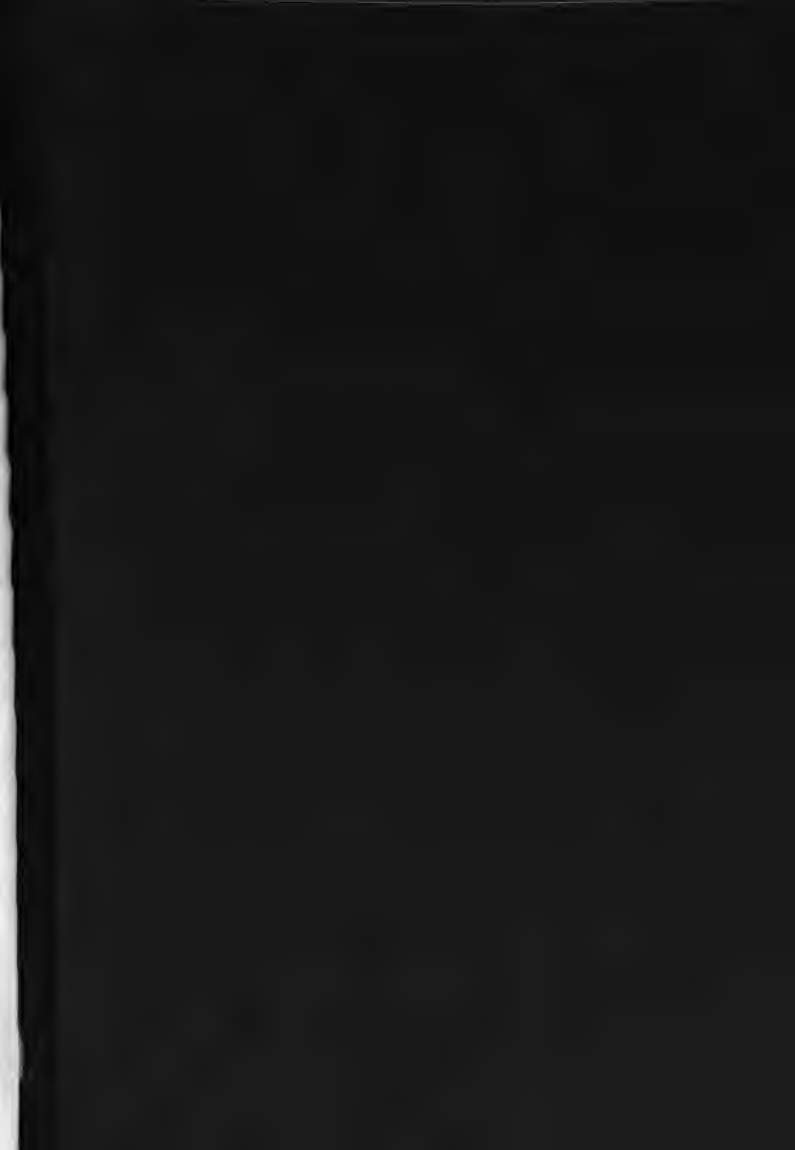
Free me from grim resolves; teach me gently to fasten my attention on the thing at hand and proceed at it with patience, faith, and the inward gaiety that wears out opposition. Constrain me to common sense; keep me from trying to take anything that is nailed down; purge me of any desire that may project me into a stone wall; nevertheless, let me not forget that all great works are absurdities till done. Let me reach for unknown stars that are beyond my grasp rather than clutch at baubles of custom and superstition.

May the potencies of song and laughter abide with me ever. As-

snage my toil with a lust for beauty, and with a forgetfulness of self that means a Higher Selfhood. And above all, Eternal Giver of all Good, if I don't accomplish what I plan, give me, I pray you, to smile at my losses, pick up the shattered ideal, and pass on to another try.

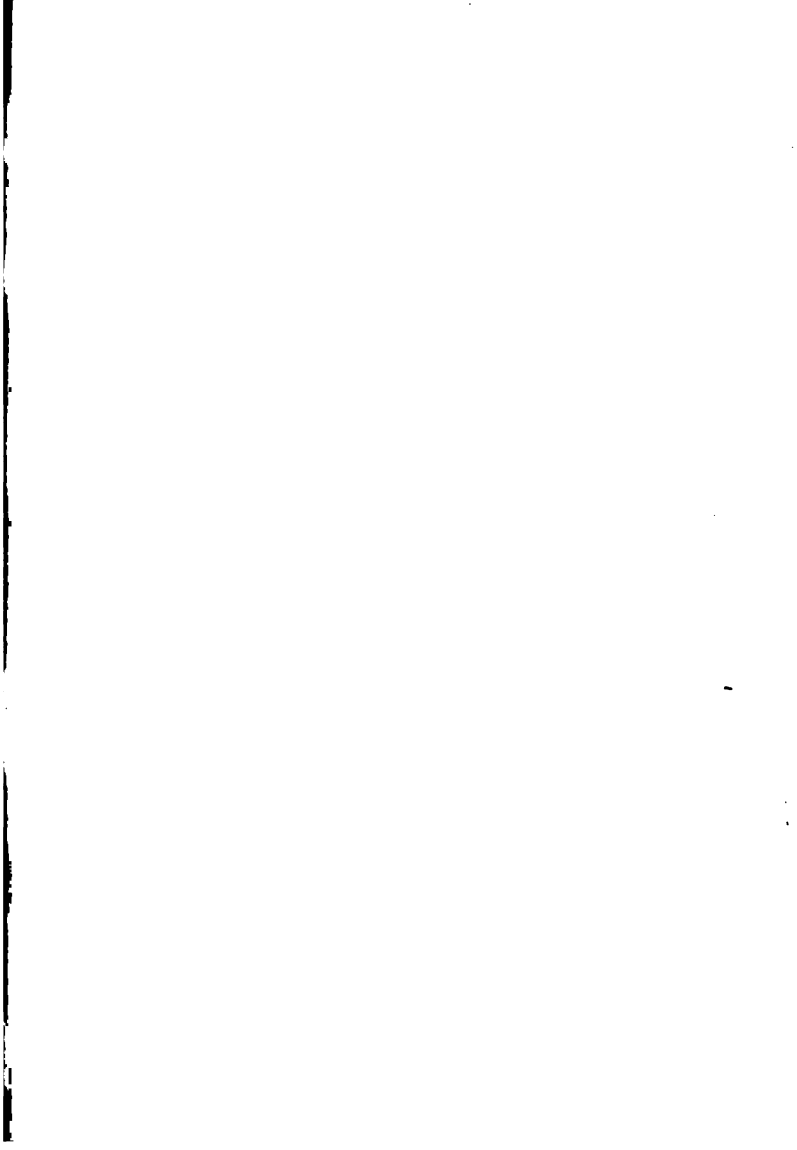


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